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## **Funko Hannibal in Florence: Fan Tourism, Transmediality, and Paratextual-Spatio-Play**

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### **Keywords**

Fandom  
participatory culture  
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fan pilgrimage

## Abstract

This article contributes to our emerging understandings of the concept of transmedia tourism by focusing on the importance of physical 'paratextual' (Gray 2010) objects as a key component of this form of tourism, especially for fan tourists. It both addresses claims that fan studies continues to neglect these practices, especially within work on fan tourism, and complicates ideas surrounding the role of the touristic souvenir within experiences of transmedia tourism. Rather than exploring how fan tourists buy merchandise relevant to a specific location (e.g. an official item at a site such as the Warner Brothers Harry Potter Studio Tour in the UK), the chapter focuses on fans' practice of taking relevant pre-bought items (such as dolls, cuddly toys, or action figures) to a location with them. Arguing that such paratextual merchandise offers a material extension of transmedia narratives and worlds, the article posits that wider consideration of this fannish practice offers a way to better understand the links between merchandise, materiality, and transmedia tourism. It draws on an account of a visit to Florence, Italy in April 2016 which was inspired by fandom of the television series *Hannibal* (NBC 2013–2015) and the broader 'franchise' including films and novels which I refer to here as the 'Lecterverse' and which operate as transmedia texts and invite the fan-tourist to negotiate the different 'versions' of Florence presented in each. Whilst previous work has analysed how places are doubly coded as tourist and media sites or operate as special locations for different fans (see Lee 2013, Brooker 2007) and different texts, the 'Lecterverse' offers a case study in which fan-tourists must negotiate the layering of various versions of the same story/text across the city. Secondly, the article explores the use of paratextual objects such as merchandise in the fan-tourist experience, focusing on the use of a *Hannibal* Funko Pop! Vinyl doll during this visit to Florence. Carrying this item around sites of importance and inserting it into photographs at key locations allowed fan identities to be performed and displayed and for the links between the narrative world and the 'real' locations to be mediated. The article argues that whilst fans themselves cannot 'enter' the narrative world, the use of relevant fannish artefacts allows play with the borders between text, self, and object. In undertaking acts of what I am terming 'paratextual-spatio-play' – the ludic use of paratextual objects in a specific place or location – fans can engage in the imaginative expansion of transmedia worlds via these practices.

## Contributor Note

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## Introduction

The concepts of 'film-induced tourism' (Beeton 2005) and 'media tourism' have been long explored in the field of fan studies. Prior work has analysed the concepts of 'cult geography' (Hills 2002) or fan pilgrimage (King 1993, Porter 1999, Toy 2017), highlighting that 'fan-text affective relationships cannot be separated from spatial concerns and categories' (Hills 2002, 145). This article contributes to our emerging understandings of the concept of transmedia tourism by focusing on the importance of physical 'paratextual' (Gray 2010) objects as a key component of this form of tourism. Its core aim is to focus attention on the material practices of transmedia tourism.

In doing so this article both addresses claims that fan studies continues to neglect these practices, especially within work on fan tourism, and complicates ideas surrounding the role of the touristic souvenir within experiences of transmedia tourism. Rather than exploring how fan-tourists buy merchandise relevant to a specific location (e.g. an official item at a site such as the Warner Brothers *Harry Potter* Studio Tour in the UK), the article focuses on fans' practice of taking relevant pre-bought items (such as dolls, cuddly toys, or action figures) to a location with them. Arguing that such paratextual merchandise offers a material extension of transmedia narratives and worlds, the article posits that wider consideration of this fannish practice offers a way to better understand the links between merchandise, materiality, and transmedia tourism.

The article draws on an account of a visit to Florence, Italy in April 2016. This was inspired by fandom of the television series *Hannibal* (NBC 2013-2015) and the broader 'franchise' including films and novels which I refer to here as the 'Lecterverse'. Reflecting on my undertaking of a form of 'fan pilgrimage' (King 1993, Porter 1999) the article takes an autoethnographically-informed approach and is based on my own observations and experiences. Despite some methodological critiques of autoethnography, as discussed below, this form of research is useful since it enables us to begin to better understand the experiences of 'ordinary fans who do not tend to be textually, and only 'spasmodically enunciatively productive' (Sandvoss and Kearns 2014, 102), who engage in acts of transmedia tourism outside of bounded or easily definable fan communities.

Firstly, the article outlines how *Hannibal* and the 'Lecterverse' function as transmedia texts which span the television show and a series of novels and film adaptations. This leads the fan-tourist to negotiate the different 'versions' of Florence presented in each. Whilst some places are doubly coded as tourist and media sites or operate as special locations for different fans, (see Lee 2013, Brooker 2007), previous work discussing this has focused on the variances *between different texts*. However, the 'Lecterverse' offers a case study in which fan-tourists must negotiate the layering of various versions of the same story/text across the city, seeking out multiple real-world sites that have been used within the books/films/TV series. Locations become multi-coded and fans may operate their own distinctions regarding which version of the story, and therefore which *Hannibal*

locations, are the most privileged and worth visiting.

Secondly, and linked to this, the article uniquely explores the use of paratextual objects (Gray 2010) such as merchandise in the fan-tourist experience, focusing on the use of a *Hannibal*/Funko Pop! Vinyl doll as a representation of my fandom on a visit to Florence.



*[Image 1]: Funko Pop! Hannibal*

Carrying this item around sites of importance, and inserting it into photographs at key locations, allowed fan identities to be performed and displayed and for the links between the narrative world and the 'real' locations to be mediated. Such practices have become

increasingly visible and popularised by social media platforms, such as Instagram, and fan-tourists can be seen engaging in such activities across a range of franchises including; *Twin Peaks* (ABC 1990-1, Showtime 2017; see the Twitter accounts such as @TinyDaleCooper and @BickeringPeaks), *Star Wars* (Lucas, 1977, 1980, 1983, 1999, 2002, 2005, Abrams, 2015, 2019, Johnson 2017; see the Instagram account @bb8\_adventure \_awakens), and *Despicable Me/Minions* (Coffin and Renaud, 2010, 2013, Balda, Coffin and Guillon, 2017; Balda and Coffin 2015; see the Instagram accounts including @minion\_brothers, and @kevin.traveler) People take objects, such as Funko Pop! Vinyl dolls or soft toys, to related touristic sites or to a general range of travel locations. The article's significance to studies of fan-tourism and transmediality is demonstrated via its response to the argument that 'little sustained research has explored the roles of tourist performances' (Kim 2010, 60) at meaningful sites and observations that 'In studies on transmediality, few scholars pay attention to the merchandise [...] which also mediates these existing stories and characters' (Lamerichs 2018, 176). This article argues for the importance of material merchandise in extending transmedia narratives and for developing an understanding of how fannish use of material objects at meaningful sites allows for a playful fan-led extension of these story worlds.

Indeed, whilst work has been conducted on tourists re-enacting scenes from film and television series in photographs (Carl et al. 2007, Kim 2010) there has been relatively little study of how and why fans draw on material objects at important sites. Furthermore, whilst Katriina Heljakka has discussed what she refers to as 'the traveling toy' (2017, 100) and the

'spatial aspects of contemporary toy play' (2017, 100) in her innovative research on contemporary toyetic culture there is no sustained analysis of the links between such objects, transmedia texts, and fan tourism in her work. This article, therefore, contributes to broader debates by focusing on the 'materialities of fandom' in 'specific configurations of place, purpose, and performance' (Rehak 2014, paragraph 1:3). It argues that the use of objects allows the fan to engage in the 'emotional commitment and imaginative work' required to 'approach a sense of communion with the fictional text' (Brooker 2004, 14). Whilst fans themselves cannot 'enter' the narrative world, the use of relevant fannish artefacts allows play with the borders between text, self, and object. In undertaking acts of what I am terming 'paratextual-spatio-play' – the ludic use of paratextual objects in a specific place or location – fans can engage in the imaginative expansion of transmedia worlds via these practices.

### Hannibal & the 'Lecterverse'

The television version of *Hannibal* aired on the *NBC* network in the United States between 2013 and 2015. Consisting of three seasons of thirteen episodes, the series adapted elements of Thomas Harris' Hannibal Lecter novels, *Red Dragon* (1993 [1981]), *Hannibal* (2009 [1999]) and *Hannibal Rising* (2009 [2006]).<sup>1</sup> *Hannibal*/the TV series follows the relationship between cannibalistic serial killer Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Mads Mikkelsen) and FBI special investigator Will Graham (Hugh Dancy) as they solve murders, whilst also developing a narrative around

the eventual discovery of, and fallout from, Hannibal's identity as the notorious murderer, the Chesapeake Ripper. The series portrays several key characters from Harris' novels including FBI Agent Jack Crawford (Laurence Fishburne), psychiatrist Alana Bloom (played by Caroline Dhavernas, and gender swapped from the male Alan Bloom in the novels), news reporter Freddie Lounds (Lara Jean Chorostecki, also gender swapped from the originally male Freddy Lounds) and psychiatrist Frederick Chilton (Raul Esparza). Whilst not attracting high audience ratings (which led to its eventual cancellation in 2015) the series was critically lauded and attracted a dedicated fan base, affectionately referred to as Fannibals. Such fandom was actively supported and those involved in the show 'frequently used Twitter to encourage fan activity, including regularly live-tweeting episodes; re-tweeting fan art and GIFs; and giving fans access to script pages, production details, and set photos' (McCracken and Faucette 2015). Despite the ending of the show on *NBC*, rumours of a revival for the series have continued and have been encouraged by cast and production personnel (Williams 2018).

### The series used

direct quotes from the novels, as well as visual references from the earlier films. Rather than being a faithful adaptation, the series is a playful pastiche of the original, swapping dialogue between characters and grafting quotes into completely different contexts (Casey 2015, 554).

Its playful 'remix' approach to adaptation, along with the paratexts that circulate

<sup>1</sup> The series was unable to utilise any characters that originated in Harris' most famous Lecter novel *The Silence of the Lambs* (1999 [1989]) due

to issues over rights ownership, although lines from the novel were used in the show.

around it, position *Hannibal* as an example of a transmedia text with an expansive universe which I refer to here as the Lecterverse. Transmediality has been defined as ‘the increasingly popular industrial practice of using multiple media technologies to present information concerning a single fictional world through a range of textual forms’ (Evans 2011, 1) and ‘practices such as franchising, merchandising, adaptations, spin-offs, sequels and marketing’ (Evans 2011, 2). The ‘Lecterverse’ fulfils these criteria via its expansion across a variety of texts including novels, movies, and the television series, functioning as a form of adaptation, spin-off and both sequel and prequel (see Scahill 2016). Rather than functioning as a straightforward adaptation of the source text, its iterations introduce new characters and narrative scenarios, as well as altering which original characters are involved in certain story events.

Furthermore, its loyal fanbase contributes to the Lecterverse’s transmediality since, as Henry Jenkins notes convergence culture refers to ‘the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want’ (Jenkins 2006, 2). For Jenkins, ‘Transmedia storytelling is the art of world making’ (2006, 21) which demands the ‘active participation of knowledge communities’ (2006, 21). The audience is a core component of convergence culture, transmediality and participatory culture since ‘consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content’ (2006, 3). The Lecterverse functions as a transmedia text, albeit one

which does not have a clearly identifiable and centralised ‘mothership’ [...] the primary text that a transmedia story is built around’ (Scott 2013, 46). Instead, its transmediality is linked both to the telling of its stories across various media forms, its various paratexts (such as an official cookbook (Poon 2016) and a guide to the series (McLean 2015), its range of official Pop! Vinyl Funko dolls, soundtracks, a range of special features on DVD and Blu-Ray releases, and the fan practices and readings that swirl around it. Having argued for the Lecterverse as a transmedia object, the article now introduces the methodological approach undertaken, outlining the rationale for an autoethnographically-informed mode of analysis.

## The Autoethnographic Method

The method of autoethnography necessitates drawing on a researcher’s own personal experiences to ‘describe and critique cultural beliefs, practices, and experiences’ (Adams et al. 2014, 1) and to produce ‘stories about the self-told through the lens of culture’ (Adams et al. 2014, 1). It

calls for self-awareness of our partialities and positionalities as cultural and media studies researchers [...]. [It] make[s] visible the reflexive voice of the writer while foregrounding the theoretical implications of objective/subjective dualisms through examinations of the relationship between ‘academic’ and ‘fan’ selves (Monaco 2010).

As Leon Anderson (2006) argues, autoethnography results from a move toward ‘blurred genres of writing, a heightened self-reflexivity in ethnographic research, an increased focus on emotion



in the social sciences, and the postmodern scepticism regarding generalization of knowledge claims' (2006, 373). Similarly, Andrew Sparkes (2003) notes the importance of the 'narrative turn' which acknowledges that 'writing is a method of inquiry, a way of knowing, a method of discovery and analysis' (2003, 60). Autoethnography has often been employed within studies of fan identities and practices to explore 'the challenges and contradictions that shape the research experience as the individual moves within and between academic and, [...] fan-audience modes of engagement' (Monaco 2010; see Driessen and Jones 2016, Fiske 1990, Garner 2018, Hills 2002, Sturm 2015).

Autoethnography has often been rejected in tourism studies due to a "scientific realist" style' that 'holds that in order to be authoritative it is necessary to adopt the passive, third-person voice, which distances the writer physically, psychologically and ideologically from his or her subject' (Morgan and Pritchard 2005, 35). It has, however, proven useful in studies of fan-tourism (see Hills 2002, Booth 2015, Garner 2017). This is arguably due to the methodological difficulty in accessing large numbers of fan-tourists to research outside of official tours (see Lee 2013) or travelling as a participant to a fan 'meet-up' with others (see Phillips 2011). Following in the tradition of using autoethnography within fan studies, this article draws on my 'own lived experiences to illuminate the relationships between souvenirs [or objects], place, self-identity and tourism performance' (Morgan and Pritchard 2005, 36).

It must be noted that the method is not without its issues. It has been accused of being 'self-absorbed vanity work [...]; re-

inscribing the authority of the researcher (Hills 2002); and as a 'privileged practice of academic faddishness that does little to challenge or change social structures' (Evans and Stasi 2014, 15). It has also been dismissed as being over-reliant on the interpretations of the researcher's own experiences and subjectivities. However, a range of methods commonly employed in audience studies, such as focus groups, interviews and analysis of online postings, are also reliant on the researcher's own interpretations. It is they who 'includes, excludes, arranges and manipulates the 'secondhand' memories in order to construct a coherent narrative in which she has material and symbolic investments' (Bury 2005, 30). Accordingly, it can be argued that autoethnography is no more subjective than other methods since all are ultimately subject to elucidation and selection by the person undertaking the research. The rationale for using autoethnography results from the importance of reflecting on one's own investments and position, when undertaking this type of trip since 'An autoethnographic analysis is always constrained by [...] the temporal and spatial coordinates in which the researcher has undertaken the research' (Booth 2015, 107). My interest here is in mapping out how the experiences of encountering locations used in the series *Hannibal* (but also referenced in the novel and film) and engaging in forms of para-textual-spatio play with a relevant fan object at these sites, intersect with my individual identity and self-narrative as a fan. This allows us to better understand how individuals operate as fans outside of organised groups and visits, particularly in relation to practices of transmedia tourism.



In doing so, I have tried to be aware of my own class, gender, age, ethnicity and educational background, and the taste formations that contribute to my fandom of *Hannibal* that have impacted upon how I traversed the cityscapes of Florence. I am aware that the economic capital that has enabled me to undertake the trip is not available equally to all fans of the series and my 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu 1984) makes me socially able to negotiate the often high-cultural spaces associated with *Hannibal* (e.g. an art gallery such as the Uffizi). My status as a white, cisgender woman also enables me to be culturally 'accepted' in such sites, offering me a form of identity privilege that enabled me to traverse a range of spaces with ease. Equally, my residence in the UK, only a short flight from Florence, imbues me with 'geographical capital' (Hills 2006) and access that *Fannibals* who live elsewhere in the world are not able to utilise. Thus, the experiences discussed here should not be read as representative of all fan visitors nor as an opportunity afforded equally to all fans of the show. Rather, they offer some initial conclusions about the transmedia tourism undertaken in Florence in relation to participatory cultures and fannish use of paratextual objects at sites of importance.

### Visiting *Hannibal*'s Transmedia Florence(s)

The first six episodes of *Hannibal*'s third season largely take place in Florence, Italy. The city is also referenced in Thomas Harris' original novel *Hannibal*, where much of the action occurs, and is used as the setting for similar events in the movie adaptation. In the television series, Hannibal flees to Florence after revealing himself to be the Chesapeake Ripper at the end of the second series and hides

there with his psychiatrist and companion Bedelia du Maurier (Gillian Anderson). He is pursued by characters including Will Graham, Jack Crawford, and associates of one of his previous victims Mason Verger (Joe Anderson) who has placed a bounty on Lecter's head so he can torture and kill him. As each race to capture Hannibal, he has killed and assumed the identity of Dr Roman Fell and taken up a position as a curator at the Capponi Library in Florence.

Whilst Toronto provided interior shooting locations that double as Florence, several scenes were shot in Italy and the city's iconography is used throughout these six episodes. Key locations, including the Duomo, Santa Maria Novella Church, the Ponte Vecchio and the Palazzo Medici Riccardi, are depicted onscreen whilst two important dramatic moments are staged inside and outside of the Uffizi Gallery. Several of these locations were previously utilised, albeit in different narrative contexts, in the film adaptation of *Hannibal* which included the interior and exterior of the Palazzo Vecchio, the Ponte Vecchio and the exterior of the Uffizi Gallery. The movie version also filmed scenes in locations such as the Santa Croce Church, the Pharmacy of Santa Maria Novella and Mercato Nuovo marketplace with its famous Il Porcellino statue of a boar.

The experience of Florence was thus inflected by *Hannibal*'s status as a transmedia text which spans literature, film and television, as well as numerous paratexts and fan's own interpretive works. There are different layers or versions of *Hannibal*'s Florence that can be identified and read differently by different visitors. The fact that specific locations may not be interpreted in the same way by all those who visit them has been noted in previous work on mediated

places. For example, Will Brooker (2007) notes how Elvis' home Graceland 'may have slightly different associations for Memphis residents as the area's main tourist focus, and its role as a pilgrimage site may even be resented by local non-fans' (2007, 430) and how fans visiting the Los Angeles locations of the movie *Blade Runner* (Scott, 1982) are 'sharing the space with [...] residents and workers' (Brooker 2004, 16). Some locations also attract fan visitors across different texts causing 'Frissions between the diverse cartographies' (Lee 2012, 62). For instance, the village of Lacock visited on a *Harry Potter* tour 'can simultaneously exist as a heritage site, Meryton (from the BBC production of *Pride and Prejudice* (1995)), Godric's Hollow and Hogwarts' (Lee 2012, 62) whilst the Canadian city of Vancouver offers 'an intersection of multiple universes' including *The X-Files* (FOX 1993-2018), *Smallville* (The WB 2001-6, The CW 2006-11) and *Battlestar Galactica* (Sci-Fi 2004-9; see Brooker 2007, 429).

However, the Florence of the 'Lecterverse' offers a different case study of how a mediated site is read. Whilst the city has been utilised as the setting for numerous movies, including *A Room with a View* (Ivory, 1985), *Tea with Mussolini* (Zeffirelli, 1999), and *Inferno* (Howard, 2016; see Zambenedetti 2014). In relation to the Lecterverse it functions unlike the locations of LA, Vancouver or Lacock not as a place that is layered with different meanings from different texts but with *different meanings from different adaptations of the same text*. The Florence of the filmic *Hannibal* is not quite the same as the Florence of the television series or the novel, allowing the fan familiar with both to experience the city in different ways. Equally, the fan-tourist who has viewed only one of these versions of

the story will not carry the knowledge of the multiple uses of the city with them, instead focusing only on the spaces most important and meaningful to their version. Thus, considerations of transmedia tourism need to consider the fact that transmediality may inherently offer a clash of different interpretations and meanings. As narratives and characters moves across texts, various locations may be used, or the same location may be used in different ways in different transmedia iterations of the story.

As part of the research, I spent four nights in Florence over the Easter period in 2016. Staying in a former Palace, the Hotel Orto de Medici, I undertook a combination of independent fan-tourist sightseeing and two organised trips which, whilst not directly branded as related to any of the *Hannibal* texts, shared thematic overlaps by focusing on the local food cultures of Florence and wine-tasting in the Chianti region. Whilst these two tours are not the focus of this article, it is worth noting that I chose to undertake them given *Hannibal*'s emphasis on cuisine and the fan practice of recreating recipes from the series (see Fuchs 2015), reading intertextually to relate our fan practices to the source material. In addition to these tours, the trip involved independent visits to locations used in both the television series and the film *Hannibal*, and some tourist sites that had no connection to either such as the Galileo Museum (although these were intertextually linked to other elements of our fan identities, such as an interest in science and space). Across our trip I visited key sites associated with *Hannibal* the TV series including the Ponte Vecchio bridge, the Santa Maria Novella church, the Uffizi Gallery, the Duomo, the train station, the Piazza Della Repubblica, the Palazzo

Ricardo de Medici, and the Ponte Santa Trinita. I also went to the Santa Croce church, Mercato Nuovo, and the Palazzo Vecchio, which are primary locations in the film version. The Ponte Vecchio, Palazzo Vecchio, Uffizi and Duomo are iconic places in Florence, popular with tourists and easy to recognise without too much detective work. To identify other locations, I drew on information circulated within the online fandom surrounding *Hannibal* on blogs, websites and social media platforms such as *Twitter* and *Instagram*.



*[Image 2: Outside the Uffizi Gallery]*

### **Funko Hannibal, Material Culture and Paratextual-Spatio-Play**

The Florence trip engaged with the transmediality of *Hannibal* since it involved use of one of the series' 'paratexts' (see Gray 2010) and our touristic play with this object. As Louisa

Stein and Kristina Busse (2012, 14) point out, 'audience engagement across platforms intended and unintended could also constitute transmedia'. Debates rage over the relationship between transmediality and paratexts, especially in relation to whether all paratexts advance or expand a transmedia universe or narrative (see for example Mittell 2015 on the distinction between 'orienting' and 'transmedia' paratexts). However, it is the use of the paratext by the fan that allows for both authors and audiences to 'co-construct transmedia narratives, story worlds and frames for engagement' (Stein and Busse 2012, 14) via their own imaginative play. This is a point backed up in Elizabeth Evans' (2011) argument that 'Merchandise such as board games and action figures offered a form of engagement with the universe of [a] series in non-audio-visual formats as they allowed viewers to create their own stories through play' (2011, 23). In this vein, I would argue that the use of a specific paratextual object, within a location or site related to a fan object, offers specific opportunities for transmedia engagement and the possibility of spatially-rooted but imaginative world-building or narrative extension, a form of practice that I am terming 'paratextual-spatio-play'.

Tourism studies scholars Michael Haldrup and Jonas Larsen (2006, 276-76) argue that the discipline has 'failed to understand the significance of materiality and objects in modern tourism, the 'sensuous immediacy' of material culture to tourists', despite the fact that tourists often purchase souvenirs from visited locations (see Goss 2004, Hobson et al. 2004, Morgan and Pritchard 2005). Similarly, as noted above, fan studies has been accused of neglecting the materialities of fandom;



For too long, scholars working within the discipline of fan studies have focused on texts and the textual practices of fandom without paying much attention to the material, physical dimension of fan culture, despite its clear importance to many fans. Fandom is about more than reading and writing; it also about touching, smelling, controlling, and collecting the objects of fandom. (Hoebink, Reijnders and Waysdorf 2014, paragraph 4.6)

This inattention has been linked to the fact that material cultures are associated dismissively with the commodification and commercialisation of fan merchandise and are often 'culturally gendered as masculine or dominated by male fans' (Hills 2014, paragraph 1.3). However, this relative neglect has had consequences for studies of fan cultures and material objects; as Avi Santo (2018, 329) argues, 'aversion to taking material fan practices seriously has led to large gaps in studying what fans actually do with the merchandise they acquire'. Indeed, some studies have examined 'the material practices of fandom through craft, commodity, collection, and curation' (Rehak 2014, paragraph 1.4) and considered the importance of physical experiential acts such as touch, smell and sound. Given the importance of material objects to both fandom and tourism, it is striking that little study has focused on the purchase of fan-related merchandise at specific sites (although see Geraghty 2014b; Booth this volume). Furthermore, the possibility that fans might actively choose to take specific fannish items that they already own to important places, and the paratextual or touristic play they may engage in *at these sites*, has rarely been examined in academic work. Greater attention needs to be paid to this to

challenge more traditional understandings of the links between tourism and merchandise. In this case, fans are taking a souvenir of a mediated property to the location of filming, and in turn enabling the creation of fan memories of the site itself alongside how the object was used in those spaces.

Lincoln Geraghty (2015, 2) introduces the concept of paratextual play by asking

how and where are [...] fictional worlds and narratives used within the paratextual play of fans? If these fantastic film and television texts offer multiple universes that express concerns within contemporary culture, how is this reflected in the rituals of fan paratextual production?

I follow Geraghty's definition here, considering how the 'paratextual play of fans' offers opportunities for 'multiple universes' or narrative worlds. Thus, when planning the trip to Florence I decided to take along a Hannibal doll produced as part of the Funko Pop! Vinyl range – a brand that produces characters related to a range of media texts (see Garner forthcoming) – with the intention of carrying it to specific sites and taking photos.



*[Image 3: Funko Hannibal outside the Duomo]*



Such practices in photographs offer an example of fan-created transmedia storytelling, further demonstrating how fans can contribute to the creation and development of story worlds that are expanding narratives outside of the official texts. Prior studies have examined the act of recreating photos at locations (Kim 2010) and sports fans taking and wearing certain forms of paraphernalia to matches (Derbaix and Decrop 2011). For example, discussing tourists' attempts to recreate important scenes in photographs, Kim notes how 'some serious screen tourists consciously plunge themselves in/between representation and reality, and form unique memories of a specific time and space' (2010, 71). However, fan-tourists can also 'plunge themselves in/between representation and reality' by utilising props or other items associated with an important text. Whilst we may dismiss this as a form of ironic, self-reflexive postmodern engagement, it also offers the opportunity for fans to play with the boundaries between text, object and self, working to recreate moments from the series and engage in ludic acts of negotiation. Such visits 'are also moments of play, when we are released from the constraints of everyday norms, customs and boundaries, temporarily free to 'act' outside of those norms' (Larsen 2015, 39).

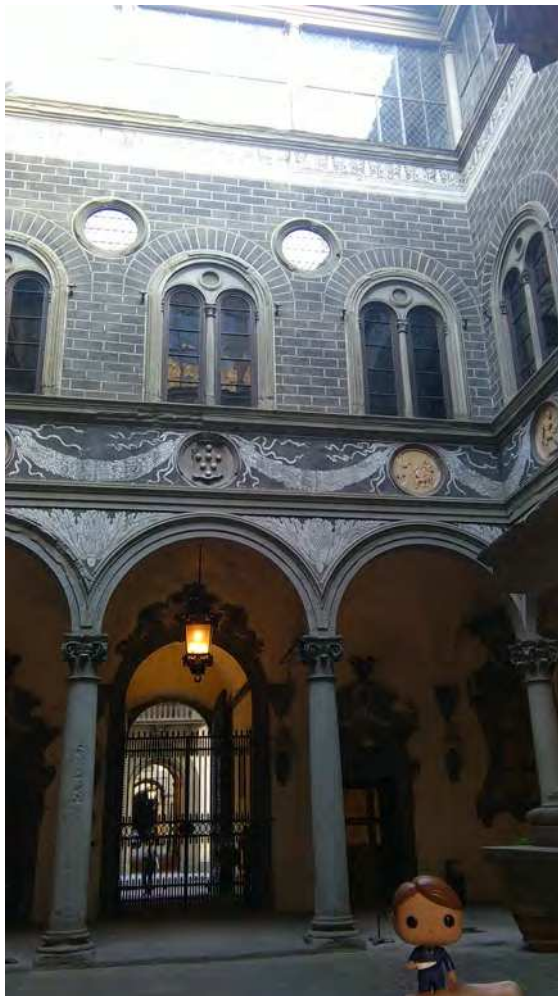
### **Transmedia Tourism and Textual/Visual Mash-Ups**

During the trip to Florence, I sought to recreate scenes from the series in photographic form with Pop! Vinyl Hannibal standing in for the 'actual' character of Hannibal. In some instances, I also recreated these moments, taking photos of myself in specific locations but

this became secondary to the need to get the best shots of the doll. In doing so, I sought to attain 'more' than the more typical tourist photos, instead seeking a unique transmedially-filtered experience of the city via both our knowledge of the filming locations and our use of the Hannibal Funko Pop! Vinyl to re-enact certain scenes or moments. Several of the places where I photographed Pop! Vinyl Hannibal were used in the filming of the television series. For example, the courtyard of the Palazzo Medici di Riccardi, the building that was the location of Hannibal's office in the Capponi Library. This is also the location of a key moment in the narrative where Hannibal disembowels and hangs the Italian detective Rinaldo Pazzi (Fortunato Cerlino) after discovering that he knows his true identity. This scene is also played out in the film adaptation of *Hannibal* but the movie uses the location of the Palazzo Vecchio to stage Pazzi's death (as discussed below). The Hannibal doll was used to take photographs in both of these locations, acknowledging that whilst the Palazzo Vecchio was not utilised in *Hannibal* the series, there was a transmedia link between the versions of the story that allowed to layer 'our' (TV series version of) *Hannibal* over the film text through the use of the paratextual object.

In the moments of re-creation between different transmedia versions of the Lecterverse, the use of the Hannibal doll offered a form of 'tactile transmediality' (Gilligan 2012) which 'bridges the gap between the virtual 'worlds' on-screen and the lived material body' (Gilligan 2012, 25). The ability to touch an object linked to the narrative of *Hannibal* enables a form of 'haptic fandom' (Williams, forthcoming) which provides links to the storyworld of the fan object.

Engaging in this type of 'paratextual-spatio-play' across locations relevant to different texts from the Lecterverse, I began to create my own transmedia forms of engagement and practice, remediating the different versions of the text, and the layers of meaning, as I negotiated use of the Hannibal Funko Pop!



*[Image 4: Funko Hannibal at the Palazzo Medici di Riccardi]*

These practices can be linked to Nick Couldry's (2007) discussion of the three overlapping spaces negotiated in the fan pilgrimage; '(1) the space of general tourism, (2) the space of media tourism, and (3) the imaginary action space 'within' the fictional narrative that (2) sometimes

generates' (2007, 143). Since fans at important sites often engage in 're-staging particular scenes, participating in immersive themed-tours and other fan performances designed to foster identification between the fictional text, the real space and particular actions' (Norris 2016, 659), we can view the use of Funko Pop! Vinyl Hannibal as an example of my participation in this 'imaginary action space' (Couldry 2007, 143). However, the use of this stand-in reflects how fandom is often simultaneously tied to emotional, affective individual experiences, material cultures and consumable goods, and the places and spaces that the fandom itself occupies, whether a site like home, where fans often display collections of merchandise (see Geraghty 2014, Woo 2014), or important sites of fan tourism.



*[Image 5: Funko Hannibal outside the Palazzo Vecchio]*

As the trip progressed, I also began to take pictures involving the prop in locations and scenes that were not direct attempts at recreation, but which seemed thematically appropriate for *Hannibal*. For example, I took Funko Hannibal on a vineyard tour and took pictures of him in the Tuscan countryside. Whilst not a direct replication of a moment from the TV series, the thematic overlap with the broader transmedia Lecterverse was established via reference to the famous line uttered by Anthony Hopkins' Lecter in the film version of the *The Silence of the Lambs* (Demme, 1990), that he once 'ate [a census takers] liver with some fava beans and a nice Chianti'.



[Image 6: Funko Hannibal in the Chianti region]

In these moments, the use of the doll also allowed ludic moments of fan practice within the broader transmedia text of *Hannibal* and for playful movement across the various iterations of the Lecterverse. In adding to, or revising the existing story world (questioning, for example, what would have happened if the TV version of Hannibal had ventured out to the Tuscan countryside), the use of a paratextual object in related places allowed for further engagement with ludic forms of transmedia tourism. The visit to the Tuscan vineyards was unique, mediated by the fandom of the Lecterverse texts and undoubtedly playful, but it also offered opportunities for the creation of new stories and the expansion of story worlds via play (see Evans 2011, 23). As Rehak notes, material objects 'constitute meaningful bridges between the abstract semiotics of the screen and the lived, tactile experience of audiences' (Rehak, 2014, para. 1.3). In the case of transmedia tourism, we can see how the use of material objects such as Funko *Hannibal* furthered this by creating a bridge between the screen, the physical object, and the meaningful location it is being used in, alongside extending possible narratives of the Lecterverse itself.

### Para-Textual-Spatio Play and Unofficial Transmedia Tourism

This more informal fan tourism allows for a looser and imaginative form of transmedia tourism and para-textual-spatio play since 'underlying fantasies can operate in an unrestricted or loosely characteristic way, rather than being rigidly imposed' (Hills 2002, 149) by organised and more commercialised spaces. Rather than the trip being



dictated by the stops on a walking or bus tour, and the 'reading' of locations pre-framed by tour guides [see Carl et al. 2007, Garner 2016], I was free to make my own way through the city, choosing from the opportunities for different forms of transmedia fan-tourist activity and practice that this offered. Hills argues that 'Cult geographies [...] sustain cult fans' fantasies of 'entering' into the cult text' (2002, 151), but the ability to fully cross the imaginative line between 'reality' and the 'text' can be negatively impacted by factors such as a locations' lack of fidelity with the on-screen version, the behaviour of other visitors to the site, or disappointment with the commodification of a place.

For instance, it was discovered that some locations were too popular for adequate photographs to be taken with the Funko Pop! Hannibal. The visit to the Porcellino fountain in the market, for instance, was so busy, even at night, that it made a mockery of the deserted scene depicted in the *Hannibal* movie. Such failures to live up to expectation have been noted in previous work on fan tourism when fans' encounter places that feel 'inauthentic' or 'ordinary' in comparison to mediated versions or their own imaginations (Erzen 2011, Norris 2013). As Brooker notes, some sites 'demand a significant amount of emotional commitment and imaginative work on the pilgrim's part to event approach a sense of communion with the fictional text' (2005, 14). Therefore, although the trip found most locations easy to access and few issues with other visitors with competing interests, it is worth considering further how the use of props such as Funko Hannibal offers one way for these encounters with important places to be negotiated, creating a link between the self and the location and also calling

attention to the levels of mediation at work via the use of paratextual-spatio-play.



*[Image 7: Crowds at the Porcellino]*

This playful movement across the different texts in the Lecterverse and the ludic use of the Funko prop in Florence and its surrounding areas can be linked to the fact that the trip was not part of an organised official fan tour. Unlike other locations associated with film or television texts, there is currently no organised film or television tourism associated with Florence and its links to the *Hannibal* universe. The online site 'Tuscany for Sustainable Tourism' has a page dedicated to listing the locations used in the 2001 movie version including the Cloister of Santa Croce church 'where



a musical concert on Dante's *Inferno* is held, and where Lector [sic] meets Allegra de' Pazzi, the beautiful wife of Rinaldo' and the Palazzo Vecchio, 'where Hannibal, with the help of Doctor Fell, held conferences on art. [and] also committed a heinous crime'. However, there has been no official attempt made to cash in on the touristic potential of the city's appearance in the recent series, in stark contrast to other film or television locations such as New Zealand's use of the *Lord of the Rings* movies (Jackson 2001, 2002, 2003; see Carl et al. 2007, Jones and Smith 2005), or New York's organised bus tours of television locations (Torchin 2002).

One reason for *Hannibal's* limited presence within Florence and Tuscany's marketing may be that 'some destinations positively de-market their film connection' (Connell 2012, 1021). Just as Cheiko Iwashita (2006, 61) argues that 'Nobody is likely to visit a country for a holiday if he or she has a negative attitude towards its nation and dislikes it for a certain reason', it is not unreasonable to extend this to genre categories to argue that *Hannibal*, in both film and television incarnations, carries associations of gruesome horror that do not sit well with place branding strategies. In that Tuscany for Sustainable Tourism chooses to foreground *Hannibal's* high culture intertexts, like opera, and generically frames the filmic version in terms of the thriller genre through mentioning only 'a heinous crime' rather than the graphic disembowelling that occurs, indicates tensions between Florence's place branding as the cradle of the Renaissance and the schlocky associations of gore, murder and cannibalism that *Hannibal* brings.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this article has contributed to the emerging debates around transmedia tourism by exploring the example of the Florence of the Lecterverse – as a city represented across a novel, a movie and a television series. This form of transmedia tourism places the affective and emotional ties of the individual fan at the forefront of our understanding. As a location that is imbued not with different meanings from a range of media texts but with different meanings from various versions of the same text. The Florence of the Lecterverse can be traversed and understood differently on several levels of fan knowledge and interpretation, rather than more typical evaluations of the authenticity of particular fannish sites or experiences.

The article's primary significance can be seen in its contribution to existing work on fandom and material cultures, and the practices undertaken when visiting specific sites by considering the use of a fannish object or prop at locations in Florence. The objects associated with tourism 'encode a variety of functions and certain objects which acquire a secular sacred character (such as photographs that encode memories or mark personal histories) are retained and cherished because of their extraordinary status and their implications for self-definition' (Morgan and Pritchard 2005, 32). However, in forms of transmedia tourism we can also consider how objects enable imaginative expansion and continuation of narratives through forms of ludic practice. Furthermore, both 'souvenirs and photographs [...] [contribute to] touristic remembering [...]. Material culture plays a crucial role in enabling and 'storing' human memories, often in

unpredictable and unconscious ways' (Haldrup and Larsen 2006, 280).

Whilst the Funko Pop! Vinyl Hannibal was not a souvenir bought during the visit to Florence, as an object it has become imbued with memories of the trip, evoking remembrances and reflections in the same way as a bought object. The use of props, such as the Hannibal doll, offer another way for fans to play in the liminal space between the self, the text and location, highlighting both how fandom is 'objectified in material practices and artifacts' (Woo 2014, paragraph 1.1) and how the use of such props in fannish locations is negotiated. This demonstrates the importance of materiality as a component of transmedia tourism and suggests the significance of different coding of souvenirs; whilst an object purchased on an official or unofficial tour, for instance, allows fans to remember that experience, the use of a pre-existing piece of fan merchandise works very differently.

However, it must be noted that I was not the first fan to use props such as Funko dolls when undertaking trips to *Hannibal* locations (posts on the *Tumblr* social networking platform showed images of similar practices, such as one of the Funko versions of Hannibal and Will Graham sat at a table beside a bottle of wine and two glasses, or in front of the narratively important *La Primavera* painting in the Uffizi Gallery<sup>2</sup>). Despite my involvement as a relatively passive user of various fan platforms and sites, I was aware of this practice, and my own undertaking of this form of fan activity was likely prompted in part by the pre-established shared meanings within

specific sections of the *Hannibal* community. In addition to the other *Hannibal* fans who posted images of action figures or toys at sites in Florence, fans of other texts also engage in practices of taking relevant objects to important sites and photographing them at these, as a quick scan of online image-based platforms such as Instagram or *Tumblr* will evidence. However, there is precedent to suggest that such practices need further attention. For example, Victoria Godwin's work on action figures (2014, 2015) examines how fans use such objects to create photoseries and stories, whilst Katriina Heljakka's (2013) work on adult toy fans also observes how 'adult toy play [...] manifests both in our corporeal and virtual environments' (2013, 271). These studies, with their focus on toys and play, as well as the volume of people posting online with other paratexts (such as *Instagram* accounts dedicated to people travelling, and posting photos, with objects such as stuffed toys), suggest that there is further work to be done on fan visits to important places and their use of meaningful material objects within those locations.

There is also scope for study of how fans share and circulate their photos and accounts of this 'paratextual-spatio-play' online and how this is framed in terms of expression of self-identity. Its attempts to blur the boundaries between self/object/text, ironic postmodern play, or in a more pedagogic mode of participatory culture or 'information mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices' (Jenkins et al. 2005, 3). In closing, I would argue that broader study of the

<sup>2</sup> Since this users' Tumblr was private, I have opted not to offer a citation here for ethical reasons.

ways in which fan-tourists 'attach an emotional bond or link between themselves and screen tourism locations and to recall what they were touched by during the previous viewing experiences and its meanings' (Kim 2010, 71) and, specifically, how this relates to notions of

transmedia tourism, is therefore needed. It is worth paying greater attention to how and why some fan-tourists take specific objects with them to important sites, especially in relation to forms of transmedia tourism and paratexts.

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